

## United Communities

On 13<sup>th</sup> July United Communities welcomed members for its first virtual meeting, a format chosen due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. We were thrilled to have close to 30 participants joining us with new names registering too.

United Communities meets on a quarterly basis and brings together service users, carers, local support organisations and professionals from across the North East Hampshire and Farnham area to discuss local mental health provision, local priorities and new initiatives.



Steve Manley, Engagement Manager for North East Hampshire and Farnham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), welcomed attendees and provided details on how the meeting would run in this format. Steve then introduced a new member of the Mental Health Commission Team, Aidan Jordan Lewis

Aidan has worked as a Mental Health Nurse across different NHS settings for many years before moving into a commissioning role, focused on physical long term conditions. We are delighted that Aidan now brings his expertise to the mental health team as a commissioning manager.

Members then received an update from Michael Scammell, Commissioning Manager for Mental Health and Learning Disabilities on the most recent information surrounding the General Practice Integrated Mental Health Service (MICHs) (find back ground information on this service [HERE](#)) which has recently gone live. The presentation, which accompanies these notes, outlines the key messages and was supported by Rebecca Isherwood Smith, Recovery College Manager with Surrey and Borders Partnership who discussed in more depth the mapping work taking place to recognise community assets.

The group carrying out this mapping work currently comprises of Community Connectors and Social Prescribers, as well as others in similar roles.

The group aims to:

- Recognise existing resources that hold value for communities
- Include assets that are not traditionally considered as a provision for people with mental health difficulties
- Identify where gaps are in their communities

- Work together to create an inclusive, accessible resource that offers some standardisation for all [Primary Care Networks](#) but enables for local variation holding in mind the make-up of the local population.

The group recognises that most services have existing lists or directories of local resources but it would seem that the approach to gathering, checking and storing this information alters across services with a common theme being that the information is only available to that particular team due to the differences in systems and rights to access. This is something they wish to tackle.

The proposal is to create a resource that is open and inclusive and which works across boundaries in order to share knowledge.

Various links were made during Rebecca's explanation with members from local organisations willing to assist in this work.

Aidan then took the virtual floor to discuss the work to be progressed around supporting those with a diagnosed serious mental illness (SMI) and people with learning disabilities, it is critical that these groups have access to physical health checks in the community. Having physical health checks can prevent future problems and supports people to live a healthier life. During the restrictions of Covid, healthcare has to find new ways of reaching people. As part of improving the way health checks are delivered members were invited to submit their interest in joining a focus group to support this work going forward.

At this point we paused to welcome comments and questions from members. Subjects discussed included:

Concerns about capacity to support those who may suffer burnout as a result of working from home and require medical support as well as the capacity to support people who have recovered from the virus, and are now experiencing symptoms of PTSD, memory loss, anxiety etc?

The mental health impact for those who have been unwell and those living with new and challenging circumstances is part of the demand modelling the mental health team are attempting to complete. They are including in this the access to services such as the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) offer provided by Talkplus in North East Hampshire and Farnham.

There is currently a wide range of information on the TalkPlus website [HERE](#) including leaflets, MP3 and video modules covering mindfulness exercises as well information on coping with Covid.

In addition the Recovery College are working to provide online educational courses by mid-July. Providing courses online increases the capacity to be able to reach out to more people as pre-recorded sessions won't have classroom size limitations.

In addition there are links to other organisations and information of crisis support, on the Frimley Health and Care Website [HERE](#)

One participant highlighted concerns regarding the temporary easements made to the [Care Act](#) during the pandemic. We are now able to confirm that Surrey County Council's Adult Social Care Team have not invoked the Care Act easements however some assessments have been completed using virtual technology and when a visit is essential these have been carried out with staff wearing suitable PPE.

### **Andover Mind – Wellbeing Services**

We next welcomed our main presenters, [Andover Mind](#), to talk to the group about the planned move for the Wellbeing centre from Aldershot to Farnborough.

The basis for the move is to provide a more spacious and inviting building for local people to access. The size and number of rooms available will also increase allowing more services and activities to be provided for longer periods in the day and at weekends.

This move allows Andover Mind to relaunch and reinvigorate the services provided by the Wellbeing Centre team, at a time where demand and need may be higher due to the strains the COVID-19 pandemic has placed on so many.

The wellbeing centre currently offers, and will continue to offer, peer support and low or high intensity support (either on a one to one or group basis) which is built around an individual's needs and circumstances. The Wellbeing Centre is also able to support families and carers.

Jody Phelvin, Director of Advice and Information Services, took us through the current Dementia and carers support offered and how they hoped this new building would enhance that offer.

Support is currently offered to adults caring for adults but in addition there is a transitional service available to young carers, aged 16-18, who will soon be recognised as adult carers. To be eligible for these services you must be living within Hampshire or caring for someone who does (please see the end of these notes for our Farnham carers support services).

The wellbeing centre will be able to provide a neutral space to come and receive support and the group plan to build on their current virtual support offer enabling a blend which will allow more choice to suit circumstances and need.

Drop in sessions will operate at regular times and days and the team can help to source outside training where required, for example in first aid or mindfulness/coping strategies. Referrals are welcomed from all agencies if you feel you or someone you know could benefit from this carers support.

During the presentation we had an active chat bar open for comments and questions as the presenters spoke. Some useful networking took place independently with the opportunity for further discussions outside of this forum offered and accepted.

In relation to the wellbeing services there was some concern that moving from Aldershot would leave that town without services. The Andover Mind team were able to reassure members that their satellite services (which travel around community venues and GP surgeries) would not stop and they would continue to work closely with partners who also provide support.

The move is planned for the end of July with the hope that viewing appointments can be launched in August and the official opening day can coincide with world mental health day on 10<sup>th</sup> October.

The Andover Mind team finished on some questions that they would love to hear your views on. These are detailed below. You can email you thoughts on these questions to [nehfccg.events@nhs.net](mailto:nehfccg.events@nhs.net) and also use this address if you would like any further information on United Communities or the content of this meeting.

**The next meeting will be the afternoon of Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October. Please save the date and we will confirm the time and format of the meeting nearer the time.**

As we open our new-being centre are there any specific activity based groups you would like?

Are there any specific therapeutic groups or programmes that you would like us to provide?

Examples may include confidence building, coping skills around anxiety and depression, how to build emotional resilience, wellness action plans.

### Can you help?



Within the Carer hubs/groups is there any specific training or workshops that you would find particularly useful?

Is there anything else you think we should be considering?

**Farnham Carers support services next page**

## Farnham Carers Support

Surrey County Council Young Carers page is [HERE](#)  
Surrey County Council Adults Carers page is [HERE](#)

Adult and Young person's carers support - **Action for Carers Surrey**

Call **0303 040 1234**, text **07714 075 993**

Email [CarerSupport@actionforcarers.org.uk](mailto:CarerSupport@actionforcarers.org.uk)

For up to date information please visit:

<https://www.actionforcarers.org.uk/coronavirus-advice-for-carers/>

Dementia support - **Surrey Alzheimer's Dementia Navigators**

Call 01932 855 582 Email [surrey@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:surrey@alzheimers.org.uk)

The National Dementia Helpline is on 0300 222 1122.

Respite support is offered by <https://crossroadscaresurrey.org.uk/>